

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A computer-implemented process for providing a geometric model database for use in a ubiquitous computing environment to respond to queries about the environment's geometric state, comprising using a computer to perform the following process actions:

accepting information about the geometric state of the environment;

building a geometric model database of the environment based on an initial input of said information, comprising,

establishing a set of entities that are of interest in the environment, each entity of which is represented by at least a coordinate frame unique to that entity, and

characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the coordinated coordinate frame of at least one other entity, rather than in terms of a coordinate frame common to all entities;

maintaining the geometric model database by modifying it based on the input of updated information about the geometric state of the environment; and

responding to queries concerning the geometric relationships between entities in the environment using the geometric model database.

2. (original) The process of Claim 1, wherein the process action of accepting information about the geometric state of the environment, comprises the actions of:

inputting identifying information from an external source concerning an object existing in the environment, referred to as an entity, which is to be included in the geometric model database, said information comprising the entity's extent which is one of (i) the physical size of the entity, or (ii) the service region of the entity; and

inputting measurements, each of which defines the entity's

relationship to one other entity in the geometric model database.

3. (original) The process of Claim 2, wherein the entity represents a camera and the camera's extent corresponds to a service region constituting a field of view of the camera.

4. (currently amended) The process of Claim 1, wherein the process action of building the geometric model database, comprises the actions of:

further representing each entity by an extent, wherein said extent defines one of (i) the physical size of the entity, or (ii) the service region of the entity; and

characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the coordinated coordinate frame of at least one other entity using a measurement defining the entity's relationship to at least one of said other entities.

5. (original) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of establishing a set of entities, comprises the actions of:

accepting identifying information from an external source concerning an object existing in the environment, referred to as an entity, which is to be included in the geometric model database, said information comprising the entity's extent assigning a unique entity identifier to each entity which is then used by the geometric model database and the external source in referring to the entity; and

making the entity identifiers available to the external source.

6. (original) The process of Claim 5, wherein an external source provides more than one extent for an entity, and wherein the process action of assigning a unique entity identifier to each entity, comprises the actions of:

assigning a separate identifier to each entity-extent combination; and

setting the measurement between entity-extent combinations associated with the same entity to zero.

7. (original) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of representing each entity by a coordinate frame and an extent, comprises a process action of representing each entity by a coordinate frame having a fixed geometric relationship to the physical object associated with the entity.

8. (currently amended) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of representing each entity by a coordinate frame and an extent, comprises a process action of characterizing an entity's extent as a polygonal region within the environment defined in terms of the entity's coordinate frame whenever ~~the~~ an external source provides information as to the shape of the entity's extent.

9. (currently amended) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of representing each entity by a coordinate frame and an extent, comprises a process action of characterizing an entity's extent as a line segment within the environment defined in terms of the entity's coordinate frame whenever ~~the~~ an external source provides information indicating the entity's extent to be such a line segment.

10. (currently amended) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of representing each entity by a coordinate frame and an extent, comprises a process action of characterizing an entity's extent as a point coincident with the origin of the entity's coordinate frame whenever ~~the~~ an external source fails to provide information defining a size for the entity's extent.

11. (original) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of representing each entity by a coordinate frame and an extent, comprises a process action of characterizing an entity's extent as a point having a prescribed

geometric relationship to the origin of the entity's coordinate frame.

12. (currently amended) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the coordinated coordinate frame of at least one other entity using a measurement defining the entity's relationship to at least one of said other entities, comprises an action of using a measurement specifying the position and orientation of each other entity's coordinate frame origin in terms of the coordinate frame of the entity under consideration.

13. (currently amended) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the coordinated coordinate frame of at least one other entity using a measurement defining the entity's relationship to at least one of said other entities, comprises the actions of:

assigning a unique measurement identifier to each measurement which is then used by the geometric model database and the external source in referring to the measurement defining the entity's relationship to another entity; and

making the measurement identifiers available to the external source.

14. (original) The process of Claim 12, wherein the process action of using a measurement specifying the position and orientation of each other entity's coordinate frame origin in terms of the coordinate frame of the entity under consideration, comprises an action of assigning a spatial uncertainty estimate to the measurement which is indicative of the accuracy of the method used to obtain the measurement.

15. (original) The process of Claim 14, wherein each measurement is provided to the geometric model database by an external source, and wherein

more than one measurement defining an entity's relationship to another entity may be provided by separate external sources, and wherein the process action of characterizing the location of each entity in the environment relative to other entities using a measurement, comprises an action of, whenever more than one measurement defining an entity's relationship to another entity is received, using only the measurement having the lower uncertainty.

16. (original) The process of Claim 14, wherein each measurement is provided to the geometric model database by an external source, and wherein more than one measurement defining an entity's relationship to another entity may be provided by separate external sources, and wherein the process action of characterizing the location of each entity in the environment relative to other entities using a measurement, comprises an action of, whenever more than one measurement defining an entity's relationship to another entity is received, arbitrarily choosing one of the measurements for use in characterizing the locations.

17. (original) The process of Claim 14, wherein each measurement is provided to the geometric model database by an external source, and wherein more than one measurement defining an entity's relationship to another entity may be provided by separate external sources, and wherein the process action of characterizing the location of each entity in the environment relative to other entities using a measurement, comprises an action of, whenever more than one measurement defining an entity's relationship to another entity is received, combining said measurements using their relative uncertainties as weights.

18. (currently amended) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the coordinated coordinate frame of at least one other entity using a measurement defining the entity's relationship to at least one of said other entities, comprises an action of revising the measurements, said revising action

comprising the actions of:

inputting a spatial uncertainty estimate associated with each measurement which is indicative of the accuracy of the method used to obtain the measurement;

identifying cycles of measurements among the measurements, wherein a cycle of measurements is defined as a string of measurements starting at the origin of a first entity frame in the cycle and following measurements from one entity to the next until reaching a last measurement in the cycle representing the relationship between the coordinate frame of a next to last entity of the cycle and the origin of said first entity frame; and

for each cycle identified, computing the difference between a given location of said first entity frame's origin and the location of that origin as indicated by following the chain of measurements making up the cycle;

computing revised measurements for the identified cycles by simultaneously adjusting the measurements based on their associated uncertainty estimates so as to make the given location of said first entity frame's origin in each of the identified cycles match the location of that origin as indicated by following the chain of measurements making up the cycle

19. (original) The process of Claim 18, further comprising a process action of repeating the process actions of inputting spatial uncertainty estimates, identifying cycles of measurements, computing the difference between a given location of said first entity frame's origin and the location of that origin as indicated by following the chain of measurements making up the cycle for each cycle identified, and computing revised measurements, whenever new measurements are provided.

20. (original) The process of Claim 18, further comprising a process action of repeating the process actions of inputting spatial uncertainty estimates, identifying cycles of measurements, computing the difference between a given location of said first entity frame's origin and the location of that origin as

indicated by following the chain of measurements making up the cycle for each cycle identified, and computing revised measurements, on a periodic basis.

21. (currently amended) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the coordinated coordinate frame of at least one other entity using a measurement defining the entity's relationship to at least one of said other entities, comprises an action of detecting errors in the measurements, said error detecting action comprising the actions of:

(a) inputting a spatial uncertainty estimate associated with the measurement which is indicative of the accuracy of the method used to obtain the measurement;

(b) identifying cycles of measurements among the measurements, wherein a cycle of measurements is defined as a string of measurements starting at the origin of a first entity frame in the cycle and following measurements from one entity to the next until reaching a last measurement in the cycle representing the relationship between the coordinate frame of a next to last entity of the cycle and the origin of said first entity frame; and

(c) for each cycle identified,
computing the location of said first entity frame's origin as indicated by following the chain of measurements making up the cycle, along with computing an uncertainty region around the computed location of the origin based on a combination of the uncertainty estimates associated with each measurement in the cycle,

determining if a given location of said first entity frame's origin is within the computed uncertainty region;

whenever the given location falls outside the uncertainty region, declaring that at least one of the measurements in the cycle is incorrect, and

whenever it is declared that one of the measurements in the

cycle is incorrect, disregarding these measurements and requesting that replacement measurements be provided.

22. (original) The process of Claim 21, further comprising a process action of repeating process action (c) whenever replacement measurements are provided.

23. (original) The process of Claim 21, further comprising a process action of repeating process action (c) periodically.

24. (currently amended) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the coordinated coordinate frame of at least one other entity using a measurement defining the entity's relationship to at least one of said other entities, comprises an action of revising the measurements, said revising action comprising the actions of:

(a) inputting a spatial uncertainty estimate associated with each measurement which is indicative of the accuracy of the method used to obtain the measurement;

(b) identifying cycles of measurements among the measurements, wherein a cycle of measurements is defined as a string of measurements starting at the origin of a first entity frame in the cycle and following measurements from one entity to the next until reaching a last measurement in the cycle representing the relationship between the coordinate frame of a next to last entity of the cycle and the origin of said first entity frame;

(c) for each cycle identified,
computing the location of said first entity frame's origin as indicated by following the chain of measurements making up the cycle, along with computing an uncertainty region around the computed location of the origin based on a combination of the uncertainty estimates associated with each measurement in the cycle,

determining if a given location of said first entity frame's origin is within the computed uncertainty region,

whenever the given location falls outside the uncertainty region, declaring that at least one of the measurements in the cycle is incorrect, and

whenever it is declared that one of the measurements in the cycle is incorrect, disregarding these measurements and requesting that replacement measurements be provided, and

(d) computing revised measurements for those identified cycles in which the given location of the origin is not the same as its computed location but in which the given location falls within the uncertainty region by simultaneously adjusting the measurements based on their associated uncertainty estimates so as to make the given location of said first entity frame's origin in each of the identified cycles match the location of that origin as indicated by following the chain of measurements making up the cycle.

25. (original) The process of Claim 24, further comprising a process action of repeating process actions (a) through (d) whenever new measurements are provided.

26. (original) The process of Claim 24, further comprising a process action of repeating process actions (a) through (d) periodically.

27. (currently amended) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of responding to queries concerning the geometric relationships between entities in the environment, comprises an action of, upon receiving a request from an external source to identify the extent of a particular entity, providing the extent information to the external source.

28. (original) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of responding to queries concerning the geometric relationships between entities in

the environment, comprises the actions of:

waiting for incoming queries from external sources for requests concerning the relative geometric relationship between two entities;

whenever a request concerning the relative geometric relationship between two entities is received, determining if a direct measurement exists between the two entities involved in the request;

whenever said direct measurement exists, providing information concerning the measurement to the external source making the request.

29. (original) The process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of responding to queries concerning the geometric relationships between entities in the environment, comprises the actions of:

waiting for incoming queries from external sources for requests concerning the relative geometric relationship between two entities;

whenever a request concerning the relative geometric relationship between two entities is received, determining if a direct measurement exists between the two entities involved in the request;

whenever said direct measurement does not exist, employing a breadth-first search to find a measurement path between the two entities involved in the request that has the fewest number of measurement links, wherein a measurement path is a chain of measurements from a first of the two entities involved in the request, through at least one intermediate entity, to the other entity involved in the request;

computing the requested measurement information using the measurements in said measurement path, if one was found; and

providing the computed measurement information to the external source making the request.

30. (original) The process of Claim 29, wherein the process action of responding to queries concerning the geometric relationships between entities in the environment, further comprises, whenever as a result of employing the

breadth-first search more than one measurement path is discovered having the same fewest number of measurement links, randomly choosing one of the discovered measurement path for use in computing the requested measurement information.

31. (original) T he process of Claim 29, wherein the process action of using a measurement specifying the position and orientation of each other entity's coordinate frame origin in terms of the coordinate frame of the entity under consideration, comprises an action of assigning a spatial uncertainty estimate to the measurement which is indicative of the accuracy of the method used to obtain the measurement, and wherein the process action of responding to queries concerning the geometric relationships between entities in the environment, further comprises, whenever as a result of employing the breadth-first search more than one measurement path is discovered having the same fewest number of measurement links, choosing the discovered measurement path exhibiting a lowest combined uncertainty for use in computing the requested measurement information.

32. (original) T he process of Claim 4, wherein the process action of responding to queries concerning the geometric relationships between entities in the environment, comprises the actions of:

inputting incoming queries from external sources for requests to find entities whose extents have a particular geometric relationship to a prescribed region or extent associated with a specified entity

ascertaining the relative geometric relationship between the frame origin of the specified entity and the frame origins of other entities

transforming the coordinates of the extents associated with the other entities into the coordinate frame of the specified entity using the respective relative geometric relationships between the frame origin of the specified entity and the frame origins of said other entities;

employing a region intersection procedure to determine if the

extents associated with said other entities intersect the prescribed region or extent associated with the specified entity; and

providing information to the requesting source as to whether the extents of any of said other entities intersect the prescribed region or extent of the specified entity, and if so which of the other entities' extents intersect.

33. (original) The process of Claim 4, wherein the prescribed region or extent associated with the specified entity, as well as the extents associated with said other entities, are characterized by polygonal areas, or degenerated version thereof constituting a line segment or point, and wherein the region intersection procedure is a polygon intersection procedure.

34. (original) The process of Claim 1, wherein the process action of responding to queries concerning the geometric relationships between entities in the environment, comprises an action of, upon receiving a standing request from an external source, responding to the request each time a prescribed event occurs.

35. (original) A system for providing a geometric model database for use in a ubiquitous computing environment to respond to queries about the environment's geometric state, comprising:

at least one general purpose computing device; and

a computer program comprising program modules executable by the computing device or devices, wherein the computing device or devices are directed by the program modules of the computer program to,

input information about the geometric state of the environment from at least one external source,

establish a set of entities that represent objects in the environment based on an initial input of said information,

represent each entity by a coordinate frame and an extent, wherein said extent is based on an initial input of said information,

characterize the location of each entity in the environment relative to other entities using a measurement defining the entity's relationship to at least one of said other entities.

36. (original) T he system of Claim 35, further comprising:

a program module for storing as initializing data in a non-volatile initializing database, information concerning the entities, their extents, and the measurements between entities contained within the geometric model database; and wherein,

the program module for inputting information about the geometric state of the environment, comprises an action of inputting the stored initializing data from the non-volatile database at the start of said process for providing a geometric model database.

37. (original) T he system of Claim 36, wherein the program module for storing initializing data, comprises a sub-module for storing only information concerning entities, extents, and measurements that is anticipated not to change substantially over time.

38. (original) T he system of Claim 37, wherein the program module for inputting information about the geometric state of the environment, comprises a sub-module for inputting update information characterizing a current geometric state of the environment.

39. (original) T he system of Claim 38, wherein the program module for storing initializing data, comprises a sub-module for storing information concerning the entities, their extents, and the measurements representative of the most current geometric state of the environment.

40. (original) T he system of Claim 36, wherein the program module for establishing a set of entities comprises a sub-module for assigning a unique

entity identifier to each entity entered into the geometric model database, which is then used by the geometric model database and external sources in referring to the entity, and wherein the program module for characterizing the location of each entity in the environment relative to other entities using a measurement comprises a sub-module for assigning a unique measurement identifier to each measurement entered into the geometric model database, which is then used by the geometric model database and the external sources in referring to the measurement.

41. (original) The system of Claim 40, wherein the program module for storing initializing data, further comprises sub-modules for:

storing the entity and measurement identifiers assigned to the entities and measurements comprising the initializing data in a non-volatile initializing database; and

making the entity and measurement identifiers available to the external sources.

42. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for providing a geometric model database for use in a ubiquitous computing environment to respond to queries about the environment's geometric state, said computer-executable instructions comprising:

inputting information about the geometric state of the environment from at least one external source,

building a geometric model database of the environment based on an initial input of said information comprising,

establishing a set of entities that are of interest in the environment, each entity of which is represented by at least a coordinate frame unique to that entity, and

characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the ~~coordinated~~ coordinate frame of at least one other

entity, rather than in terms of a coordinate frame common to all entities, and maintaining the geometric model database by modifying it based on the input of updated information about the geometric state of the environment.

43. (currently amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 42, wherein the instruction for building the geometric model database, comprises sub-modules for:

further representing each entity by an extent; and
characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the ~~coordinated~~ coordinate frame of at least one other entity using a measurement defining the entity's relationship to one of said other entities.

44. (original) The computer-readable medium of Claim 43, wherein the instruction for inputting information about the geometric state of the environment, comprises a sub-module for inputting update information characterizing a current geometric state of the environment.

45. (original) The computer-readable medium of Claim 44, wherein the instruction for maintaining the geometric model database, comprises a sub-module for updating the geometric model database on an on-going basis, using the inputted update information characterizing a current geometric state of the environment, to ensure to the best degree possible given the update information, that only entities currently existing in the environment and their associated current extents are included in the database, and that measurements between the current entities are representative of the current geometric relationships between the current entities.

46. (original) The computer-readable medium of Claim 45, wherein the sub-module for establishing a set of entities, comprises sub-modules for:

assigning a unique entity identifier to each entity entered into the

geometric model database, which is then used by the geometric model database and external sources in referring to the entity; and
making the entity identifiers available to the external sources.

47. (original) T he computer-readable medium of Claim 46, wherein the sub-module for establishing a set of entities, further comprises a sub-module for deactivating existing entity identifiers associated with entities that are indicated in said update information as no longer being in the environment.

48. (currently amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 47, wherein the sub-module for characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the coordinated coordinate frame of at least one other entity using a measurement, comprises sub-modules for:

assigning a unique measurement identifier to each measurement entered into the geometric model database, which is then used by the geometric model database and external sources in referring to the measurement; and

making the measurement identifiers available to the external sources.

49. (original) T he computer-readable medium of Claim 48, wherein the sub-module for deactivating existing entity identifiers associated with entities that are indicated in said update information as no longer being in the environment, comprises sub-modules for:

deleting all measurements associated with a deactivated entity from the geometric model database; and

retiring the measurement identifier assigned to any measurement that is deleted for being associated with a deactivated entity.

50. (original) T he computer-readable medium of Claim 43, wherein the sub-module for characterizing the location of each entity in the environment relative to other entities using a measurement, comprises sub-modules for:

assigning a unique measurement identifier to each measurement entered into the geometric model database, which is then used by the geometric model database and external sources in referring to the measurement; and
making the measurement identifiers available to the external sources.

51. (currently amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 50, wherein the sub-module for characterizing the location of each entity in the environment in terms of the ~~coordinated~~ coordinate frame of at least one other entity using a measurement, further comprises sub-modules for:

whenever a new current measurement is provided in said inputted update information, using it to replace the corresponding measurement already existing in the geometric model database; and

assigning the measurement identifier associated with the existing measurement to the new current measurement.